

NILES/BUCHANAN/CASS AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Advisory Committee

MINUTES

April 26, 2016

1:00 P.M.

Niles City Council Chambers

TAC Members Present:	Joe Bellina, Cass County Road Commission Pat Bellaire, Village of Edwardsburg Brian Berndt, Berrien County Road Commission Craig Bradfield, Howard Township Barbara Cook, Cass County Planning Commission Richard Cooper, Niles Charter Township Kelly Getman-Dissette, Niles Dial A Ride Steve Hicks, Bertrand Township Jason Latham, MDOT Southwest Region Jan Personette, Four Flags Area Chamber of Commerce Kim O’Haver, Buchanan Dial A Ride Debbie Sullivan, Mason Township Don Ryman, City of Buchanan Evan Smith, Berrien County Community Development/Berrien County Transit Jonathon Smith, MDOT Coloma Office
TAC Members Absent:	Malinda Cole-Crocker, Buchanan Township Andrea Dewey, Federal Highway Administration (ex officio) Fred Featherly, MDOT-Multi-Modal John Klimek, Berrien County Board of Commissioners John Lanum, Michigan Department of Transportation Bill Marx, City of Buchanan Stewart McKenzie, Federal Transit Administration (ex officio) Melinda Michael, Four Flags Area Council on Tourism Joe Ray, City of Niles Representative, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance Representative, Milton Township
SWMPC Staff Present:	Kim Gallagher Gautam Mani
Others Present:	Pete Fournier, Cass County Road Commission

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was called to order by Bellina at 1:02 p.m. and he led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Minutes

Ryman noted that on page 3 of the minutes from March, under "MDOT," the first sentence should read "US-12 bridge deck over M-51 restore and rehabilitate is still on track for construction in 2017, though a study is being done regarding whether to remove the bridge and potentially make a surface street there."

A motion by Cook with support by O'Haver to approve the TAC Meeting minutes, as corrected, from March 22, 2016. **Motion passed.**

3. Changes to the Posted Agenda

None.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Staff Report

▪ Performance Measures Updates

Mani said that it had been some time since the NATS MPO had been updated on the state of national performance measures, which had been in the works since the previous legislation, MAP-21 was passed in 2012. The FAST Act continued MAP-21's performance-based planning framework. Mani said that rulemakings to set performance measures were starting to be released, and others were still being released for a public comment period. Mani reported that the final rule on safety performance measures had been released. The five performance measures chosen at the federal level were:

- Number of fatalities
- Rate of fatalities based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries based on Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Number of non-motorized serious injuries and crashes

Mani reported that the performance measures on non-motorized crashes were added in after much public comment. The state now has until August 31, 2017 to set targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries, and the MPOs must establish targets within 180 days after the state sets its targets

An overview of the status of other performance measures rulemakings, including congestion mitigation, system performance, and pavement and bridge asset management, were provided in the meeting packet. In addition, information was provided about the status of performance measures related to public transit asset management and safety. Mani said that this section would serve as the Performance Measures section in the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program.

Latham said that regarding asset management performance measures, MDOT regions were already under a directive to maintain interstates at 90% good condition, and thus had to divert funds from other trunkline routes towards that end. That process would be continuing over the next few years.

Bellina wondered how transit funding would be impacted with asset management, and whether agencies were going to have to divert funds in order to replace buses and then come out of compliance with safety performance measures, or vice versa. Smith believed that the asset management performance measures were very similar to what the transit agencies were already doing in terms of replacing buses on a fixed schedule.

Ryman asked about driverless vehicles and whether performance measures were taking those into account. Mani said that if driverless vehicles helped reduce fatalities and injuries, then that was welcome, but there was nothing specifically about driverless vehicles in the rulemakings.

- **2017-2020 TIP Development Update**

Mani said that development of the 2017-2020 Transportation Improvement Program document was well underway, and that NATS could anticipate further sections of the TIP being brought forward in May for approval in June. In particular, the consultation list was being developed and the environmental justice analysis of projects proposed in the 2017-2020 TIP was taking place.

- **2017 Work Program (UWP) Update**

Mani reported that NATS committee members would see a draft of the UWP for committee approval at the May meeting. Gallagher explained that the UWP showed how SWMPC intended to use its federal planning dollars and the local match dollars that communities in NATS provide for planning services. Mani said that committee members should be referring to this document and asking questions of the MPO if they wondered about the return on investment they are getting for their membership in NATS. SWMPC staff had been working on a new introduction section that addressed current NATS issues, and would be modifying the work activities based on what the MPO intended to complete in 2017.

Gallagher said that to that end, SWMPC was requesting that the NATS May meeting be moved back to its original date of May 24th. SWMPC's Executive Director and the new planner will be in attendance to present the UWP, as Mani will have departed and Gallagher will be in conference. However, the May 24th date will allow SWMPC to make changes to the UWP as needed prior to submitting to MDOT on June 1.

A motion by Minks with support by O'Haver to approve moving the NATS meeting back to May 24th. **Motion passed.**

- **Railroad Crossing Count Requests and other traffic counts**

Gallagher said that SWMPC had been receiving requests for traffic counts at railroad crossings from local agencies that MDOT had asked them to complete. This was the first time that SWMPC had received these sorts of requests. Bellina noted that the Cass County Road Commission had already completed railroad counts requested for its townships. The program is relatively new and is designed to help with rail safety funding applications.

Mani encouraged NATS member jurisdictions that needed help with railroad counts to mark "YES" to the question on the traffic count form about whether this was being done to fulfill an MDOT count request. Mani said he would put in the count requests for the Village of Edwardsburg.

6. Public Transit Updates

- **SWMPC Transit Updates**

Gallagher said that responses had come in to the request for proposals (RFP) for the Countywide Service Plan. There were a total of three proposals. The evaluation team, made up of stakeholders from throughout Berrien County, would be evaluating the proposals in the weeks ahead based on overall strength and the ability of each respondent to complete each of the work tasks. One or two respondents would be invited in for an interview. Gallagher said that SWMPC hoped to have a contract in place by late May.

Gallagher also said that in follow up to the Regional Coordinated Plans for Human Services Transportation, there was a group in Michigan looking at consolidating mobility managers over multiple counties. This could potentially pose a number of coordination challenges. O'Haver said that the group that was pushing the new coordination effort was Michigan Transportation Connection. Gallagher said she was not sure how the funding was going to work under any changes to the mobility manager program.

Ryman said that any efforts to change county transportation should not change Buchanan Dial A Ride.

- **Agency Updates**

No reports.

7. Land Use Updates

No report.

8. Project Updates

Berrien County Road Commission

- Preventative Maintenance project on Bertrand Road, Stateline, and Third Sts has been obligated.
- Indiana Michigan River Valley Trail was currently in the midst of an archaeological study to make sure no historic artifacts were being disturbed. Once the study concludes, the grant can be officially awarded for 2017 construction.

Cass County Road Commission

- Adamsville Road from May St to US-12 Resurfacing was obligated March 30th and is on track for a June letting.
- Fir Road from Redfield St to US-12 resurfacing was obligated on April 12th. It is scheduled for a June letting.
- Fir Road from Stateline Road to Redfield Road resurfacing was obligated in April and is scheduled for a June letting.

Bellina said that the GI package for Phase II of the Gumwood Road project had been tossed out at MDOT when it was not obligated in time in 2015, so CCRC had to restart the process.

The design phase of the Edwardsburg Sports Complex Non-Motorized Path CMAQ project was under contract.

City of Buchanan

- The Red Bud Trail resurfacing from the South City limits to Front Street, and Red Bud and Front St traffic signal replacement project is scheduled for construction over the summer.

MDOT

- US-12 bridge deck over M-51 restore and rehabilitate is still on track for construction in 2017.
- US-12 from Bakertown Road to the start of the divided section has been moved to 2018 construction.

9. Old Business

None.

10. New Business

▪ Resolution of Support for 5303 Competitive Application

Mani said that one grant opportunity to do planning studies may be coming through a competitive statewide process for 5303 transit planning funds. The state has accrued a balance of approximately \$6 million in these planning funds that went unused by MPOs, and it is opening up this balance for projects. Many activities are eligible, but they must relate to transit planning.

SWMPC is filing two applications, but only one project impacts the NATS area. Mani said SWMPC was looking for approval in support of an application for:

- An update of Berrien County's Coordination Human Services Plan. This was a requirement imposed under President George W. Bush that in order for an agency to use FTA funds, it needs to have a plan for coordinating travel needs with human services. The Berrien County plan requires an update. This impacts funding of mobility management programs as well as Job Access and Reverse Commute programs.

A motion by O'Haver with support by Bradfield to recommend that the Policy Committee approves the resolution of support for 5303 funding. **Motion passed.**

▪ 2014-2017 TIP Amendment

Mani said that he had coordinated with Dan Roberts at the Coloma Office to understand better the location of the "US-31 BR" signal optimization project that was proposed for 2016 construction by MDOT. Mani presented a map of the location, stating that it covered much of Main St in Niles as well as M-51. This project was funded for \$72,000 entirely in National Highway Performance Program funds.

Mani also noted that the 2017 road projects for the Berrien County Road Commission, the Cass County Road Commission, and using the NATS' allocation of STP funds, would be administratively modified to take into account the proportionate reduction in funds that were needed in order to bring the MPO into fiscal constraint. The MPO was previously overprogrammed for 2017, despite approval from FHWA. This was already agreed to and submitted in the NATS 2017-2020 TIP.

A motion by Berndt with support by Getman-Dissette to recommend that the Policy Committee approves the 2014-2017 TIP Amendment, retroactive to last month's meeting (refer to March minutes). **Motion passed.**

▪ State and Federal Updates

Gallagher passed around flyers stating that SWMPC would be hosting a meeting by MDOT regarding the update of MDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan on May 23rd.

11. Public Comment

None.

12. Privilege of the Floor

Mani once again thanked committee members for an excellent experience these past four years. He said he would really miss this region, and while his job in New York state would be focused on helping the MPOs there, he encouraged MPO members to reach out to him if they ever needed to.

Gallagher reminded committee members to stick around to eat cake, and sign cards if they wanted. The committee members wished Mani good luck in New York.

13. Adjournment at 2:13 p.m.

- The next meeting will be May 24 at 1:00 PM.

Minutes compiled by: Gautam Mani, Associate Planner, 2016